

General Framework for Neurodiversity at Work Pilots¹

Step 1: Internal Planning Phase

- **Create a well-articulated business case:** Demonstrate the value proposition and how a Neurodiversity at Work program will advance disability inclusion in your organization
 - Learn more in the [Autism at Work Playbook](#), Part 2, The Business Case, page 16.
- **Secure executive sponsorship:** Engage executives who will be supportive and have the influence to get others to support the program.
- **Develop a budget:** Determine resources needed with executive support
- **Identify a program leader or leaders:** Who are the internal champions for disability inclusion; they will play a key role in ensuring the success of the pilot.
- **Secure buy-in and support:** Business unit leaders who can provide job opportunities within their units are essential.
- **Build partnerships with relevant internal units:** Partner with D&I, Talent Acquisition, Legal, Human Resources and other stakeholders, such as representatives from your disability ERG.
- **Form a cross-functional project team:** Sponsored by a senior executive, this team should include the program leaders, business unit leaders, and internal units. This will help keep the Program on track and organized.
- **Consider:** Identify mentors or peer "job buddies" and include these individuals in the cross-functional project team.
- **Additional resource:** [Autism at Work Playbook](#), Parts 1 through 3, pages 5 – 23.

¹ This framework was adapted from the [Autism at Work Playbook](#) and the Neurodiversity at Work video created by the Disability:IN Inclusion Works project.

Step 2: Define Scope and Employment Model

- **Identify the right roles:** Internships, apprenticeships, full time? STEM? Non-exempt?
- **Decide the size of the pilot program:** Limiting the number of roles and the size of your initial pilot group provides the flexibility to be responsive and adapt your practices when necessary.
- **Determine the specific location:** Where will you start your program and in which business units? Ideally, select a location where there is:
 - Internal support from business unit leaders
 - Potential for strong partnerships with community providers who will provide support and source candidates
- **Identify hiring managers:** Hiring managers who support the initiative and have the aptitude to learn quickly and champion the program, are critical to success.
- Define the applicant, interview, and onboarding process
- Additional resources for this phase:
 - Inclusion Works Resource Library: <https://disabilityin.org/IW-Resources>
 - Autism & Neurodiversity at Work; Autism at Work 2017 Business Models Overview Poster (DOC)
 - Autism & Neurodiversity at Work; [Autism at Work Playbook](#), Part 4 beginning on page 26
 - Animated Videos from Inclusion Works; Neurodiversity at Work video

Step 3: Internal Training

- **Provide customized training and support:** Supervisors, hiring managers, colleagues, and key office staff should receive customized training to ensure inclusion.
- **Training providers:** Inclusion Works, outside organizations, or internal learning and development team using various resources
- **Examples of training:** Autism awareness, autism as a culture, effective collaboration, interview preparation, tips on respectful interactions and effective management techniques.

Step 4: Recruiting and Sourcing Talent

- **Identify external resources:** With the help of other companies and Inclusion Works, locate external resources that can help you implement the Program, including organizations that specialize in recruiting and screening candidates who are neurodiverse:
 - Resources can include state vocational rehabilitation programs, nonprofits, colleges and universities, and others that offer support in identifying and sourcing candidates.
 - Interview these potential partners and seek their references to help you determine whether they can meet your company's needs.
- **Source and identify candidates:** Establish which candidates will be a good fit for your open positions, teams and company overall.
- **Screen candidates:** This may take the form of phone interviews, initial tests or questionnaires, meetings, video interviews, and less formal gatherings
 - Note, some companies rely on nonprofit organizations to screen candidates; others use internal recruiters who have been trained to recognize neurodiverse talent.
- **Assessment & training:** Individuals who are selected to advance are invited to a day long, week-long or longer in-person orientation, training, & evaluation experience.
 - Not everyone who joins the orientation is hired but they depart with new skills that can be adapted to other employment
- **Onboarding and ongoing support:** This is most likely handled by hiring managers who have taken formal neurodiversity training and have met and interfaced with the candidates throughout the selection process.
- **Additional information and resources:** [Autism at Work Playbook](#), Part 5 – 9, pages 29- 58.

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